

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
May 18, 2015**

PRESENT: David C. DiCicco, Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Member
Christopher J. Gerstel, Member
Michael J. Retzky, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director
Robyn G. Fink, Assistant Director

ABSENT: Matthew M. Toolan, Vice Chairman

GUESTS: Caleb Bayer, Boy Scouts Troop 10
Amy Hurley, Community Center of Needham
Jo-Anne Ochalla, Community Center of Needham
Carl Tarabelli, Needham High School
Mark Miskin, Needham Soccer Club
Sabatino Sodano, Needham Soccer Club
Todd White, Needham Resident
Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager
Edward Olsen, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry

Mr. DiCicco called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meeting – April 27, 2015:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting and the annual reorganization meeting of April 27, 2015. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel, and both sets of minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **Director's Report:** Mrs. Chaston asked for an update on the sinkholes at DeFazio Park. Ms. Carey said the sinkholes formed due to the freezing, thawing, and then refreezing causing a shift in the ground and breaks in the irrigation. The DPW Parks and Forestry is quickly repairing the irrigation, and trying to proactively do repairs to avoid sink holes.
3. **Program Report:** Ms. Fink gave a brief history of the Needham Youth Center starting in the early 1970s to today. The Needham Youth Center has been transferred from the Health Department to the Park and Recreation Department who will oversee the programming at the start of the school year. Mr. DiCicco is pleased to have the department working on this program for the middle school population.
4. **Discussion Items**

- A. Town Meeting Review:** Mr. DiCicco commended Mrs. Chaston and Selectman Daniel Matthews on their Rosemary Pool presentation. All projects connected with Park and Recreation passed at Town Meeting. Further discussion was held later in the meeting.
- B. CPC Approved Projects:** Mrs. Chaston suggested that the Commission continue to reach out to the Finance Committee (FinCom) and other departments about CPC money as without the CPC money, many of the large Park and Recreation projects would not be able to be completed. She also thanked Jo-Anne Ochalla, Phil Robey, and Katy Dirks for their positive comments at Town Meeting in favor of the design money for the Rosemary Pool project. Mrs. Ochalla suggested that the Commission needs to continue to educate the public throughout the process, give a storyline of Rosemary Pool, and continue to inform the public on the large impact the pool has on the community.
- C. Rosemary Pool Study:** Discussed later in the meeting.
- D. School Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey informed the Commission that the Permanent Public Building Committee would be meeting tonight to review different schematics of Hillside School at Hillside and DeFazio, both “east”, and “west.” The PPBC would not be making a decision tonight, and the Commission would be given an opportunity to see the different schematics to give their pros and cons to each location.
- E. Chambers Cove Update:** Mr. DiCicco informed the Commission of the “Chambers Cove” Fundraiser being put on by the Needham High School Alumni Hockey Players on May 29, 2015, to raise the needed funds for the memorial benches and plaque to be placed at Rosemary Lake.
- F. DeFazio Lights:** Mrs. Chaston was approached by a parent requesting the lights at DeFazio be turned off at 9:10 PM, instead of 9:00 PM, to allow players and parents to leave the field. She directed the parent to talk with the Needham Soccer Club about ending practices a bit earlier therefore giving time to exit the field. Needham Soccer Club Scheduler Sabatino Sodano said the coaches know what time the lights go off and need to adjust their practices accordingly.

Assistant Town Manager Christopher Coleman spoke about the Needham Youth Center and how excited he was to see the program move back under Park and Recreation. He thanked Ms. Carey, Ms. Fink, and the Commission for taking on the program and giving it a new home. He mentioned that the parent advisory group would still be involved, but Park and Recreation would be hiring staff to manage the monthly events. Ms. Carey spoke about getting some of the middle school teachers involved in the program to gain buy-in. She said that Park and Recreation would

look at not only providing a location for the dance and sports nights, but expanded the program to include other programs such as trips off site.

G. Trails Projects: Ms. Carey discussed the May 7th Public Workshop about the Needham Reservoir ADA Trail. This was the second public workshop. There is a little more to do to the design and then the project will move into the permitting phase. In December, a request for construction funds will be made to the CPC. Handicap parking spaces would need to be added to different areas of the parking lot. Ms. Carey also mentioned that the trail would be wheelchair accessible and they were looking at ways to make it accessible for those with visual impairments. Ms. Carey reported that the Rail Trail should have all of the ties up in a week to ten days. The next phase of construction, including the stonedust surface, will be bid in early summer. Ms. Carey showed the Commission the Nature Passport created for the Reservoir Tyke Hike by Administrative Specialist Kristen Wright.

H. Commission Regulations, Policies, Goals: Tabled to the June 22nd meeting.

5. Action Items

A. Project Request: Soccer Club: Needham Soccer Club Executive Director Mark Miskin presented a proposal from the Needham Soccer Club and the Needham High School Soccer Alumni for a scoreboard and bleachers at Brock Field at DeFazio Park in honor of Don Brock's retirement as the long-time coach of Needham High Boys Varsity Soccer. They would like to have everything in place to do a dedication over Columbus Day Weekend in October. Mr. DiCicco asked if Parks and Forestry Superintendent Edward Olsen was okay with the location and if the scoreboard would interfere with baseball. Mr. Miskin noted that Mr. Olsen would be arriving at the meeting shortly, and also said that they have reached out to Needham Baseball and Softball about adding a backside to the scoreboard for their use. The company that will make the sign says it is no problem to add on a backside at a later date. Mr. Olsen walked the area for the bleachers and said there would be an issue with the middle bleacher due to a depression for a drainage ditch, but the two on the outside should not be an issue. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the proposal by the Needham Soccer Club and Needham High School Soccer Alumni for a scoreboard and bleachers at Brock Field at DeFazio Park. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

B. Light Waiver Request: Soccer Club: Mr. Retzky made a motion to grant the Needham Soccer Club a 9:30 PM extension for the lights on the Saturday night of their Memorial Weekend Soccer Tournament at DeFazio. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

C. Youth Center Appointment: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to appoint Karen Folb to the Needham Youth Services board as the representative of the Park and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and approved unanimously.

D. Swim Team Request: Mr. Retzky made a motion to approve the request from the Needham Summer Swim Team to use Rosemary Pool during the 2015 season for morning practices from 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM and for some evening swim meets, with a waiver of the \$5 participant fee, but a requirement for all participants to have season passes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gerstel and approved unanimously.

4. A. Town Meeting Review (con't): Mr. Retzky mentioned the article on Rosemary Pool in the Needham Times saying that it seemed lopsided with information and he felt the Commission needed to write a letter with the facts. He feels that the Commission needs to have a true campaign of facts to help ensure that the Commission gets the support it needs going forward. Ms. Carey read two draft letters, one prepared by Mr. Retzky and the other by Mr. Toolan. The Commission decided to use Mr. Retzky's letter with the addition of the number of users per year at Rosemary Pool. Mr. DiCicco said he will continue to reach out to Town Meeting Members who voted against the Rosemary Project to inform them how things are progressing and to answer questions. Ms. Carey suggested mailing out materials to Town Meeting Members in addition to postcard invitations to public meetings..

4. C. Rosemary Pool Study: The Commission reviewed the draft RFQ. Ms. Carey is going to ask for clarification on the \$350,000 for Phase I and the estimated construction cost of \$7.5 million. Mr. Retzky would like to see one to two public meetings where the designs can be shown, people can ask questions, and then the plans can be reviewed again. Mr. DiCicco wants to form an advisory group that can meet with the Commission during the design process.. The group will be formed at the June 8th meeting. Mr. Retzky went on to add that the number of meetings would be important for 1-2 public meetings, advisory group meetings, and meetings with PPBC and CPC. Ms. Carey would like it clarified in the RFQ that the project is building a new pool and a renovation of the building.

5. E. Appointment to PPBC for Pool Study: Mrs. Chaston made a motion to appoint Mr. Toolan and Ms. Carey as user agency representatives to the PPBC for the Rosemary Pool Project. Mr. Gerstel seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

6. Topics for Future Agendas: Mrs. Chaston reminded the Commission that a meeting with the Memorial Park Trustees needs to be scheduled to talk about the joint field scheduling policy and lighting at Memorial Field.

6. **Adjournment of Meeting:** Mr. Retzky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM. Mrs. Chaston seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Fink, CPRP, CPSI
Assistant Director